

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1926

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 25, 2009

Title: An act relating to exempting from certificate of need requirements hospice agencies that serve the unique cultural or religious needs of religious groups or ethnic minorities.

Brief Description: Exempting certain hospice agencies from certificate of need requirements.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Ericksen, Appleton, Pettigrew, Kenney, Moeller and Ormsby).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/09, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/23/09, 3/25/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley and Parlette.

Staff: Rhoda Donkin (786-7465)

Background: A certificate of need is required before a health care facility is constructed, renovated, sold, or when beds are added or specialized services are increased. The certificate of need process is administered by the Department of Health (DOH) and the following factors are considered: the population's need for the change, the availability of less costly services, the financial feasibility, impact of the proposal on the cost of health care to the community, the efficiency and appropriateness of existing services and facilities, and whether the proposed change can improve quality of care to the community.

Summary of Bill: A certificate of need is not required for a hospice agency if the hospice agency:

- is designed to serve the unique religious or cultural needs of a religious group or ethnic community;
- is operated by an organization that has been in business for at least ten consecutive years and offers a continuum of long-term care services;
- has a census of no more than 40 hospice patients;
- commits to maintaining Medicare certification;

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- serves only patients within the same county as the majority of the long-term care services offered by the organization that operates the agency; and
- is not sold or transferred to another entity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is a need for hospice services that take into account the ethnic, dietary, cultural, and belief system that are deeply important to the Jewish community. Even the most willing and well trained hospice agencies are not necessarily able to meet the specific needs of our Jewish community because they do not have the knowledge or trust that Kline Galland has established over many years. It is also important to remember that people who are needing hospice services now may have experienced the horrors of the Holocaust and need special sensitivity to their dying process.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jeff Cohen, CEO Kline Galland; Dave Brumer, Director Social Services, Kline Galland, Lilly De Jaen, Kline Galland.